

STAY HERE'S Guide on Anxiety

WHAT IT IS

Anxiety is feeling severe worry or tension. If you're struggling with anxious thoughts and want to talk to someone you can contact the [HOPELINE here](#).



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANXIETY

Everyone feels nervous at some point – whether it's because of a job interview, a difficult conversation or taking a driving test. Anxiety is a problem when it begins to take over your life.

Anxiety can be a symptom of other mental health conditions, or on its own (known as Generalized Anxiety Disorder). If you feel anxious all of the time or for no obvious reason, speak to someone about how you're feeling.

There are many effective ways to deal with anxiety, including lifestyle choices such as prayer, exercise, as well as therapy and medical treatments.

HOW DOES ANXIETY FEEL?

Anxiety feels different to everyone who experiences it and has a combination of physical and mental symptoms that can range from mild to severe. You may experience some of the following:

- Feeling panicky or on edge, often or for long periods of time
- Difficulty sleeping because of worries or recurrent thoughts
- Panic attacks or intense periods of fear and discomfort
- A compulsion to carry out certain rituals to keep things from going wrong
- Physical symptoms like sweaty palms, dry mouth, tense muscles
- Increased heart rate and/or shallower breathing
- Avoiding certain situations or things in everyday life because of nervousness and worries



WHY DO PEOPLE GET ANXIOUS/ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a natural human feeling that can help us understand what's happening in our lives, make important decisions, and avoid danger. It's normal to feel nervous before big life events and in any unfamiliar or uncomfortable situation. Anxiety becomes an issue when it begins to take over your life and stops you doing everyday things.

If that all sounds overwhelming, it's important to remember you're not alone. According to the World Health Organization, over 250 million people are thought to live with anxiety related conditions – and help is available.

No matter your interests or background, there's loads of things to help you deal with anxiety, as well as support groups, churches, and organizations that are dedicated to helping people who are struggling. From exercise and nutrition to finding a healthy friend group and church, or therapy and prayer, speaking to someone about your worries can help you to find ways to cope and move forward.

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

Some of this stuff might sound small or even silly, but it's worth a try, right? There's no one solution for everyone, find what works for you.

Breathe

Yes, you read that right. If you're feeling anxious, your breathing is probably shallower than normal. Take a few breaths, trying to breathe a little more deeply each time.

Or you might use something like the 4,5,6 breathing technique to find some space and give yourself a chance to calm down. It's all about breathing in for 4 seconds, holding for 5 seconds, and then, you guessed it, exhaling for 6 seconds. It may feel a little forced the first few times you try, but it's worth staying with it.

Focus on the here and now (AKA get out of your head)

Pause a moment. What can you see? Hear? Smell? Focus on this moment and your immediate surroundings. Give yourself a moment to feel a bit more you.

Pray

The bible tells us to: *“Cast all your anxiety on him (Jesus) because he cares for you.”*
- 1 Peter 5:7

You can talk to God like you talk to your best friend. He’s always listening. Here’s a sample prayer to help you get started:

“Lord, I thank you for drawing near to me when I draw near to you. To think that you are mindful of me overwhelms my soul. But today my spirit is heavy and my body is weak. I can’t bear the weight of this anxiety any longer. I recognize I can’t get through this alone, and I pray against the very active enemy who is trying to shake my faith and keep my eyes off you. Help me stand strong in you. Strengthen these weary bones and remind me of the truth that this pain and panic will not last forever. It will pass.

Fill me with your joy, peace, and perseverance, Father. Restore my soul and break the chains of anxiety that bind me. I trust you with my panic, and I know that you have the power to take it all away. But even if you don’t, I know I don’t have to be a slave to my fear. I can rest in the shadow of your wings, and I will rise and overcome by your unwavering strength. In Jesus’ name, amen.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” -
Philippians 4:6–7

What would you say to a friend?

Imagine your best friend was feeling how you’re feeling now. What would you say to them? Yep, it’s pretty certain you’d be understanding, supportive and kind. So don’t be too hard on yourself. Show yourself the same care you might show someone else.



TALKING ABOUT ANXIETY

It can be difficult to talk about anxiety with your friends, family or a medical professional. Here's some ways you can start a conversation around how you're feeling:

"I need to talk. I've been struggling with _____ and I've been very anxious about it."

"You might have noticed that I haven't been around as much lately. I've been finding things difficult, and I think I might be experiencing anxiety."